

Message Text

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ACTION PA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 /032 W
-----111539Z 123922 /45S

R 111222Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0493
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USIA FOR DIRECTOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, FR, US
SUBJ: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FRANCE

REF: PARIS 02315-C

1. SUMMARY. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL ACTIVITIES, AS IN MANY OTHER AREAS OF FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, ARE AT AN UNUSUALLY HIGH POINT. MANY THINGS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO BRING ABOUT THIS FELICITOUS SITUATION. AMONG THE MAJOR FACTORS ARE THE IMPROVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, THE END OF AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, THE CONTINUING EVIDENCES OF REPRESSION IN EASTERN EUROPE AND OTHER CLOSED SOCIETIES, THE OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED AND EXPLOITED BY OUR BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE, THE CONTINUING CULTURAL FERMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE OPENNESS OF OUR OWN SOCIETY FOR OBSERVATION AND REPORTING, THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF THIRTY YEARS OF EXCHANGES, BOTH ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC, BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE, AND THE ENORMOUS INTEREST IN THE UNITED STATES SCENE EXHIBITED BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THE FRENCH POLITICAL SPECTRUM. ALL ELEMENTS OF THE MISSION,

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AND PARTICULARLY USIS, HAVE WORKED TO EXPLOIT AND SOLIDIFY THESE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES. TODAY, BY AND LARGE, THE U.S. AND ITS POLICIES ARE THE CONTINUING SUBJECT OF MUCH COVERAGE IN ALL MEDIA, MOST OF IT EVEN-HANDED AND FAIR IF OFTEN SUPERFICIAL AND NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE. THE CULTURAL CENTER ON THE RUE DU DRAGON IS REGARDED AS A MAJOR FIXTURE IN THE FRENCH

CULTURAL SCENE AND ITS ACTIVITIES ARE WIDELY REPORTED IN THE NATIONAL DAILY AND WEEKLY PRESS, SPECIALIZED PUBLICATIONS, AND IN VARIOUS JOURNALS GENERALLY CONSIDERED "LEFT." MAJOR INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING, THE MEDIA, AND FRENCH CULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS (INCLUDING THE NEW CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU) CO-OPERATE ACTIVELY WITH THE DRAGON CENTER AND OTHER ELEMENTS USIS. EVEN UNIVERSITIES AT VINCENNES AND NANTERRE, HOTBEDS OF LEFTWING CONTESTATION, ARE CO-OPERATING ON PROGRAMS. THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, PROGRAMMING, WITH SPEAKERS. TO A GREAT EXTENT THIS WILL DEPEND UPON THE ABILITY OF WASHINGTON TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SPEAKERS, EXPERTS, IN FIELDS OF CURRENT INTERESTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. THIS IS A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SOCIETY, AND WE MUST ALWAYS STRIVE TO HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE PEOPLE TALKING ON OUR BEHALF. UP UNTIL NOW, FRENCH HAVE BEEN DESIROUS OF INCREASING LEVELS OF ACTIVITIES AND EXCHANGE IN ALL AREAS. THIS COULD CHANGE WITH A NEGATIVE RESPONSE FROM NEW YORK PORT AUTHORITY ON CONCORDE'S LANDING RIGHTS AS THIS HAS BECOME AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE HERE. IF THE ATMOSPHERE FOR INFORMATION/CULTURAL WORK HERE SHOULD CHANGE BECAUSE OF THE DECISION ON CONCORDE, THEN IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT CULTURAL PROGRAMMING WILL BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT AS A MEANS TO MAINTAIN CONTACTS.

END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER YEARS OF ANTI-AMERICAN AND HIGHLY BIASED TREATMENT BY ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN PARTICULAR, RELATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH ALL MEDIA ARE CORDIAL AND CLOSE. ALL RADIO AND TV NETWORKS CONSULT AND CO-OPERATE ON PROGRAMS ABOUT UNITED STATES. TELEVISION AND RADIO TALK SHOWS INVOLVING U.S. OR U.S. INTERESTS ALMOST INVARIABLY HAVE REPRESENTATIVE ABLE PRESENT U.S. VIEW, OFTEN WITH ACTIVE HELP THIS MISSION IN LOCATING AND PROVIDING SPOKESMAN. ON ISSUES OF TOPICAL INTEREST WE USUALLY INVITED PRESENT U.S. POINT OF VIEW THROUGH OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE SPOKESMAN. WHERE U.S. VIEW DIFFICULT TO CONVEY (E.G. CONCORDE LANDING RIGHTS) MAGAZINE INFORMATION ET DOCUMENTS ABLE CARRY AUTHORITATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION SUBSEQUENTLY PICKED UP BY OTHER MEDIA AND SPOKESMEN AND CONVEYED TO BROAD PUBLIC AS WELL AS THOSE SPECIALLY INTERESTED.

3. SUBSTANTIAL FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN PRESENCE OF HIGHLY SKILLED INFORMATION OFFICERS

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ABLE TO DEAL IN FLUENT FRENCH AND ON FULLY PROFESSIONAL BASIS WITH MEDIUMS FROM LEVEL OF EDITOR OR PRODUCER TO LEGMAN AND TECHNICIAN. THIS CAPACITY MUST BE MAINTAINED AS INTEGRAL PART USIS OPERATION IN FRANCE.

4. ON CULTURAL FRONT, THERE IS WIDESPREAD CONVICTION AMONG YOUNGER INTELLECTUALS THAT THE "ACTION" IS IN THE U.S., AND THEY EAGER FOR LEVEL OF EXPOSURE WHICH A FEW YEARS AGO MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALLED CULTURAL IMPERIALISM. DEFINITION OF CULTURE IN THIS REGARD GOES FAR BEYOND TRADITIONAL FINE ARTS TO EMBRACE, PERHAPS IN PARTICULAR, MODERN DANCE, PHOTOGRAPHY, MODERN MUSIC, THEATER, APPLICATIONS OF VIDEO INCLUDING VIDEO ART, AS WELL AS MORE TRADITIONAL AREAS OF ART AND LITERATURE.

5. CENTRE POMPIDOU OFFERS EXCELLENT EXAMPLE BOTH ASPECTS THIS PHENOMENON. WHATEVER THE OPINION ABOUT CENTRE ARCHITECTURALLY OR ESTHETICALLY, FACT IS THAT IT IS HAVING ENORMOUS IMPACT FRENCH CULTURAL SCENE APPLYING TECHNIQUES MOST OF WHICH IN USE IN U.S. FOR SOME TIME. (REPORTS THAT FRANCE AT LAST HAD AN OPEN LENDING LIBRARY DREW COMPLAINTS FROM PEOPLE WHO KNOW THAT U.S. HAS BEEN OPERATING THEM HERE FOR YEARS, TO TAKE ONE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AMUSING EXAMPLE). CENTRE POMPIDOU REPRESENTS ULTIMATE IN FRENCH CONVICTION THAT POLITICS AND CULTURE ARE INSEPARABLE IF NOT, INDEED, OFTEN IDENTICAL. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT FIRST LARGE EXHIBIT WILL BE PARIS/NEW YORK/PARIS, DESIGNED TO DRAMATIZE CULTURAL AND LITERARY INTERACTION BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES IN THIS CENTURY.

6. THERE ARE NO END OF OPPORTUNITIES IN EXCHANGE OF PERSONS, WHICH FRENCH WOULD LIKE TO SEE GREATLY BROADENED BOTH IN NUMBERS AND AREAS OF INTEREST. DEMAND IS SIMPLY BEYOND OUR CAPACITY TO MEET. ONE EXAMPLE IS FRANCO-AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE (FULBRIGHT) WHERE FRENCH ARE MATCHING U.S. CONTRIBUTION AT LEVEL OF \$350,000 PER YEAR. (BUDGET WAS ONCE IN EXCESS OF MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY, FROM U.S. SIDE, BEFORE TWO DECADES OF INFLATION). BUT IN ADDITION, FURTHER EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE FRANCE ATTACHES TO U.S. IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, FRENCH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY SENDING 256 STUDENTS TO U.S. THIS YEAR IN ADDITION TO THE 40-ODD FINANCED THROUGH FULBRIGHT COMMISSION. MINISTER OF CULTURE WOULD LIKE TO CREATE FRENCH ACADEMY IN U.S., ON LINES OF ACADEMY OF ROME, WHICH WOULD GIVE FURTHER SCOPE FOR YOUNG FRENCH IN FIELDS SUCH AS ARCHITECTURE, ART, DANCE, DESIGN, ETC.

7. FRENCH AUTHOR-JOURNALIST JEAN-FRANCOIS REVEL (WITHOUT MARX OR JESUS, THE TOTALITARIAN TEMPTATION), HIMSELF A MARXIST, WHEN ASKED WHAT U.S. COULD DO TO INFLUENCE FRENCH YOUNG PEOPLE SAID "SEND THEM TO THE UNITED STATES." IN LIEU OF THAT, ESSENTIAL TO BRING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND PARTICULARLY ITS MOST CONSTRUCTIVE AND CREATIVE ASPECTS, TO FRENCH YOUNG PEOPLE.

8. NO DOUBT MORE PROGRAMMING COULD BE DONE ON POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AREA. IT MUST BE DONE CAREFULLY AND PROGRAM MUST BE OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY. THIS IS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPETITIVE SOCIETY, AND THE FRENCH ARE NOT INTERESTED IN BEING "TAUGHT". SPEAKERS IN THESE AREAS MUST BE ABLE TO PRESENT THE U.S. POSITION, BE IT ATLANTICISM, MONETARY POLICY OR WHATEVER AND MUST HAVE THE PROPER

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CREDENTIALS. NAMES SHOULD BE KNOWN BY COUNTERPARTS IN FRANCE AND BE WILLING TO SET UP A DIALOGUE, NOT TEACH. IN MY BELIEF, GREAT CARE WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN IN THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM IF IT IS NOT TO BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE IF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BECOME STRAINED THROUGH LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONCORDE ISSUE.

9. FRANCE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ALLIES, IN ADMITTEDLY PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF THEM. WE HAVE BUILT UP STRONG LINES OF CONTACT, AND IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE DO ALL POSSIBLE TO MEET THE FRENCH LEVEL OF INTEREST AND CAPITALIZE ON THESE ASSETS. IT IS SURPRISING TO SOME AMERICANS, DESPITE ALL EXPLANATIONS, HOW LITTLE THE FRENCH UNDERSTAND, OR WANT TO UNDERSTAND, OUR FEDERAL SYSTEM. THEY CANNOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES CANNOT ORDER THE NEW YORK PORT AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT THE CONCORDE ON A TRIAL BASIS. THE ISSUE HAS BECOME TERRIBLY EMOTIONAL AND COULD AFFECT CULTURAL/MEDIA PROGRAMMING. IF WORSE COMES TO WORSE, IT WILL BE MAINLY IN THE CULTURAL SPHERE WHERE CONTACTS AND PROGRAMMING CAN BE MAINTAINED. ALL OF THIS SUGGESTS THAT AT THE LEAST, PRESENT LEVELS OF

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ACTIVITY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, EXPANDED IF
POSSIBLE, AND THAT INFORMATION AND CULTURAL OFFICERS
CONTINUE TO BE HIGHLY QUALIFIED, IN COMMAND OF THE
LANGUAGE, AND IN PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY.

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS, REPORTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS07181
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770084-0847
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770369/aaaacilk.tel
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION PA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PARIS 2315
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3135349
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FRANCE
TAGS: PFOR, FR, US
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7cc5bab9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009